

Building Police Capacity in Afghanistan

The Challenges of

a Multilateral Approach

BY WILLIAM B. CALDWELL IV AND NATHAN K. FINNEY

To lead an untrained people to war is to throw them away.

—Confucius

An effective police force is critical to achieving Afghan aspirations for stability and U.S. strategic objectives in Afghanistan. As the most visible representation of the government in towns and villages across the country, police capacity must be the highest priority of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA) and international community. When a sufficient and sustainable Afghan National Police (ANP) is built and employed, it will help assure the people that the GIRoA is committed to their security and prosperity, serving as a shield to protect them from malign actors and insurgent forces. The acquisition of this legitimacy is the primary objective that will help defeat the insurgency and bring enduring peace and stability to Afghanistan.

From the Bonn Agreement in 2001 to today, at least seven non-Afghan organizations have been created by the international community to support the reconstruction of a police force. The lack of unity of effort among these organizations created obstacles to developing this necessary force. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Training Mission–Afghanistan (NTM–A) was activated in November 2009 to overcome this lack of unity of effort, as well as attempt to bring greater coherence to the generation, development, training, and sustainment efforts for the ANP. Since its establishment, NTM–A has embarked on a new approach that includes greater synchronization of efforts with partner nations and organizations. To prosecute the new approach, NTM–A formed C3 relationships—not command, control, and communications—but cooperation, collaboration, and coordination with all of these organizations.

Lieutenant General William B. Caldwell IV, USA, is Commanding General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Training Mission–Afghanistan. Captain Nathan K. Finney, USA, is a Strategist serving with the NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan.

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How We Got Here

With the conclusion of the Bonn Agreement following the fall of the Taliban, the division of security sector reform took a lead-nation approach (see figure 1). The approach laid out five tasks that all lead nations were to strive for:

- ❖ make security forces effective
- ❖ improve management of security expenditures
- ❖ demobilize and reintegrate unneeded security personnel
- ❖ replace the military with police security
- ❖ remove military members from political roles.¹

while professionalizing the nascent Afghan army was fairly straightforward, the process was not as easy with the police forces

Given decades of police association between Afghanistan and Germany, the Afghan Interim Authority created in Bonn requested that Germany take charge of police reform. Following Bonn, Germany pledged 10 million euros for renovation of the police academy, reconstruction of police stations in Kabul, provision of police vehicles, training instructors, and help with police reorganization and coordination of donor activities.² This would prove to be a significant task, as any centralized police forces that existed during the Afghan civil war of the 1990s were disbanded by the Taliban. During those years, there were no centralized government police forces.³ While professionalizing the nascent

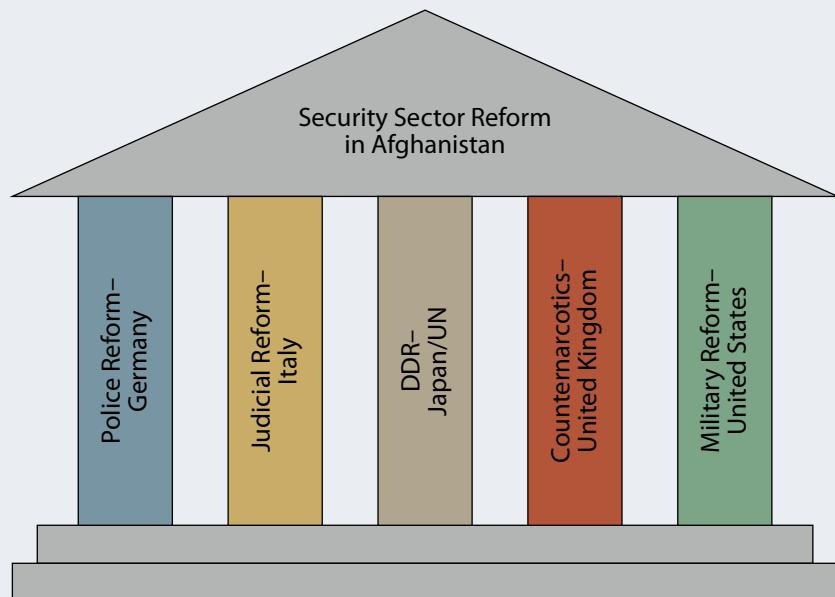
Afghan army was fairly straightforward, the process was not as easy with the police forces. Their bad habits had become ingrained, and corruption was endemic.⁴

Following Bonn, the United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution 1401 established the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) to assist in leading international efforts to rebuild the country, including the police. Additionally, the UN Development Program (UNDP) created the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA) to channel multilateral aid to the police. The fund's objectives were to finance the salaries of the police, which the Afghan government could not, procure nonlethal equipment, rehabilitate police facilities, train police, and strengthen law enforcement capacity across the country.⁵ UNDP, through UNAMA, is the UN LOTFA fund manager.⁶ Decisions on which programs to fund are made through a committee of all donor nations.

When it became clear that the lack of cooperative agreements among the lead nations as to the scope of their efforts and willingness to cooperate was not creating a sufficient police force to counter increasing threats by the Taliban and other insurgent groups, the international community searched for other donors capable of taking on this difficult task.⁷ Of particular concern, as one witness characterized it, was Germany's narrow training-focused vision of how it was going to reform the police, as well as the few personnel and resources committed to the endeavor.⁸

In response, the U.S. Government gave the Department of Defense the responsibility to support police reform efforts already instituted under a contract managed by the Department of State.⁹ This was facilitated initially through the Office of Military

Figure 1. Pillars of Security Sector Reform Established in the Bonn Agreement



Cooperation–Afghanistan (whose commander also acted as the U.S. Security Coordinator for all security sector reform efforts). When it began training police as well as military forces, this organization was renamed the Office of Security Cooperation–Afghanistan and finally the Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan, which began developing programs, in conjunction with German police representatives, to reconstruct and reform the ANP. To complement this effort, the European Union Police Mission to Afghanistan (EUPOL) was created in 2007 to develop and coordinate broader European national efforts to support police reform in Afghanistan. This built on the efforts of the German Police Project Office and other international actions in the field of policing and the establishment of the rule of law.

Also in 2007, the Afghan government, the United States, United Nations, and European Union created the International Police Coordination Board (IPCB). It functions to coordinate efforts of all countries contributing to reforming the Afghan Ministry of Interior (MoI) and the ANP. The IPCB meets monthly and is chaired by the Afghan Minister of Interior. It is supported by a secretariat with representatives from all contributors to the police development effort.¹⁰

Since 2001, various countries have developed bilateral agreements between the GIRoA and other nongovernmental partners to create specific programs. Examples include a bilateral agreement between the GIRoA and Germany to run the National Police Academy in Kabul and agreements for Turkish and Dutch training centers in Wardak and Uruzgan Provinces, respectively.

These programs are national contributions directly provided to the GIRoA, but beyond the scope and authority of the IPCB and NTM-A mandates to develop police.

The U.S. Embassy in Kabul, which funds the Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs to contract trainers, logistics, and security at seven police Regional Training Centers, is another organization that trains the ANP. The multiple organizations have led to a confusing system for police development. The lack of coordination among all entities developing the ANP has created uneven progress in police development and duplication of effort among competing organizations trying to attain the same objective. For example, the lack of integration of LOTFA into the overall unity of effort has led to two issues. The funds dispersed are from external donors, creating dependency on foreign aid, making Afghanistan a ward of the international community for years to come. Additionally, while the United States is the largest donor to the fund (giving \$347 million of the \$974 million donated from 2002 to 2009¹¹), the decision to disperse funds can be vetoed by any donor, regardless of the size of

the lack of a unified chain of command, including the relative inability of one government agency to cede operational control of contractors to another, has led to problems in efficiently changing programs of instruction

donation. This creates tension among partners and results in slower bureaucratic processes to affect police development.

Additionally, the State Department contract has led to confusion and delays in

implementing the police training program. The lack of a unified chain of command, including the relative inability of one government agency to cede operational control of contractors to another, has led to problems in efficiently changing programs of instruction. Contract restraints also prevent the placement of instructors in dangerous areas, even though these areas may be where they are most needed.

While bilateral programs can increase both the capacity and capability of the ANP, several issues contribute to a lack of unity with other programs. Bilateral programs are comprised of national contributions directly provided to the GIRoA and are not necessarily coordinated with existing elements developed in Afghanistan to synchronize efforts across organizations, such as the IPCB. This also leads to different programs of instruction from different concepts of policing. Some national contributions focus on training ANP that are capable of community policing within safer areas, while others train counterinsurgency and survival techniques that fit in more dangerous environments. A lack of common standards creates forces not appropriate for the current threat environment.

Although formed in January 2007, the IPCB was not at full operating capacity until the beginning of 2009, leaving a coordination gap in the interim.¹² In several areas, donors and the MoI still operate outside of agreed upon structures and beyond the authority of the IPCB. An example, as noted above, is a bilateral agreement, which does not necessarily coordinate with other efforts in country. Instead, contributions can be based on what the international donor is politically capable of giving, whether that capability is needed or not—creating further confusion and leading to duplication of effort toward developing the ANP.

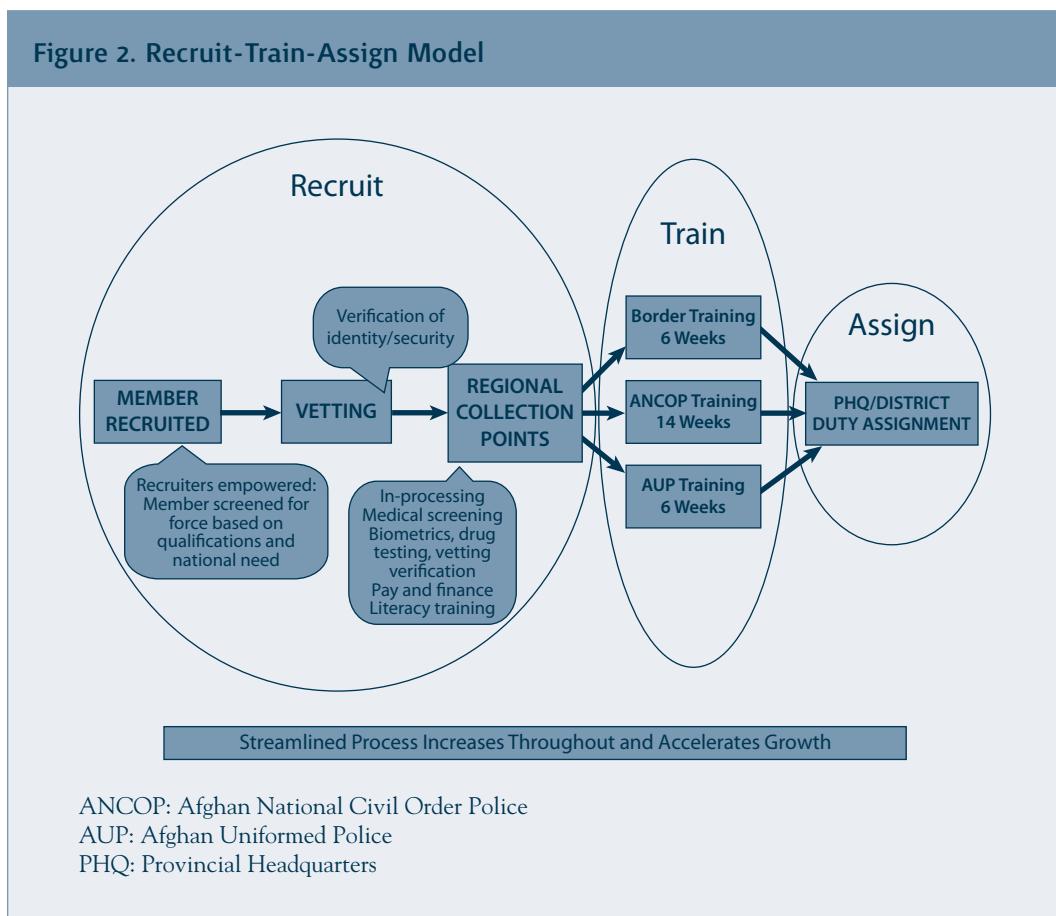
U.S. Marine Corps (Daniel Martin Monahan)



Recognition of the lack of consistent and timely progress that these disparate efforts have shown led to the creation of yet another major command, the NTM-A.¹³ This organization, made up of military and police professionals from 19 nations, was designed to facilitate the close cooperation and coordination of all organizations involved with developing the ANP. It supports the development of self-sustaining institutions that will allow the ANP to train and professionally educate security forces to enforce laws and protect Afghans in the future.¹⁴ The key mission of the command in relation to developing the ANP is to establish their institutional training base and grow their force—in quantity and quality.

While most military organizations exercise command and control over their mission, this environment forced NTM-A leadership to think differently. To develop better unity of effort, NTM-A established a “C3 relationship”: cooperation, collaboration, and coordination in the development of the Afghan National Police. NTM-A has a focused strategy that includes two phases: development and transition. To effect its strategy, NTM-A first focused on all actors to *develop* both quantity and quality in the ANP until they are capable of controlling coercive force within the country without significant support from the international coalition. This will be complete when police forces within Afghanistan embrace their role in society, are able to resource them, and are capable of protecting the people within their borders while providing law and order to the state. The second phase is *transition*, which will occur when the GIRoA develops sustainable generation and training systems that can be perpetuated by the ANP. When this occurs, the international community will be able to step back into an assist role, allowing Afghans to take the lead for security.

Figure 2. Recruit-Train-Assign Model



The Way Ahead

To achieve this growth and professionalize the force, NTM-A and the Afghan MoI have developed five priorities that together make up a new approach to generating police forces, comprised of a Recruit-Train-Assign model, pay, partnering, predictability, and leader development. This approach is designed to create a police force of quantity *with* quality that has the enduring institutions to guarantee sustainability by GIRoA. Together, the initiatives will create a ripple effect across the programs developing the ANP.

First, NTM-A began with the institution of a Recruit-Train-Assign model (see figure 2). This model replaces the previous Recruit-Assign model that had been in place largely since the beginning of the reform effort. This new model ensures that all new policemen receive formal training before performing their duties. The MoI is establishing Recruiting and Training Commands to support this approach and provide better structure and unity of effort to bring in new personnel and ensure they are properly trained to a common standard. Additionally, NTM-A modified basic training and extended the training day to reduce the overall length of the course by 2 weeks. An

extended training day was necessary to increase the required throughput in order to enlarge the quantity of the ANP. To increase quality, the new 6-week course maintains the previous curriculum while adding 64 hours of mandatory literacy instruction for every police officer.

With 95,000 ANP already recruited and assigned in the preceding 7 years, developing a trained professional force was more than simply starting from the beginning; we were starting from a deficit. The consequence of failing to resource this mission properly was a police force that could not make its end strength goals and lacked the quality necessary in a professional security force.

To further support the Recruit-Train-Assign approach, NTM-A put great emphasis on increasing the coordination of bilateral efforts, including the:

- ❖ National Police Academy in Kabul headed by the Germans
- ❖ German police training centers in Mazar-e-Sharif, Feyzabad, and Konduz
- ❖ Czech police training center in Logar
- ❖ Turkish police training center in Wardak
- ❖ Dutch police training center in Tarin Kowt
- ❖ British police training center in Helmand
- ❖ French Officer Candidate School at the Regional Logistics Center in Mazar-e-Sharif.

Together with the national heads of delegation from each country, NTM-A focused each of these sites to create interoperable programs of instruction to increase quality and throughput to create police officers more quickly to meet

growth goals. Coordinating disparate training throughout the country continues to be a challenge—beginning with awareness of ongoing programs. A year after its activation, NTM-A continues to discover programs conducted by international organizations.

NTM-A also fostered greater collaboration among the other actors that train the ANP. Through the IPCB, NTM-A is engaging UNAMA to leverage LOTFA funds to pay for

the MoI now provides a living wage (including wage parity with competing jobs such as those offered in the Afghan National Army) and monetary incentives such as retention bonuses and hazardous duty pay

the additional ANP required to meet internationally mandated growth goals: 120,000 police by March 2011, and 134,000 by October 2011. Additionally, EUPOL has been engaged in close cooperation to include its unique skills in the training of special police forces such as the Afghan National Civil Order Police.

Second, pay incentives were added to increase the quality and quantity of ANP in the new approach. Under these programs, the MoI now provides a living wage (including wage parity with competing jobs such as those offered in the Afghan National Army) and monetary incentives such as retention bonuses and hazardous duty pay. These actions enhance GIROA ability to recruit and retain capable people who can be developed into a more professional police force. Critical to these efforts was the cooperation of NTM-A, UNAMA, and LOTFA, which have paid \$60 million in base pay to police officers and \$75 million for

a \$45 per month pay raise and hazardous duty pay initiated by MoI so far in fiscal year 2010.¹⁵

Third is partnering, which is key to gaining quality and increasing quantity through the new approach. Partnering helps patrolmen and officers who received their basic training to build further on the critical skills and basic tasks learned. This growth is essential for the professional development of each individual police officer. Partnership also provides mentorship that assists in accountability, development, and enforcement of standards critical to

successful counterinsurgency operations and the transition of security responsibility to the Afghan National Security Force depend on the creation of a well-structured, highly trained, and professional police force

increasing the quality of the force. As coalition forces partner with their counterparts, they instill in the ANP leaders the need for a higher standard of care for their patrolmen and equipment, training, and leadership throughout their force, thereby increasing retention and reducing corruption.

Fourth, current operations tempo is creating unsustainable attrition within the Afghan National Police. The lack of any predictable pattern to their movement out of combat areas and into retraining/refitting causes police officers to leave the force. To provide more predictability to the force, the MoI is planning to institute an operational deployment cycle. Units fall within one of three periods: training, deployment to an area of conflict, or refitting/refurbishing from a deployment. This initiative moves Afghan National Police units that have been constantly

in harm's way for months on end, replacing them with fresh units. The ability to be removed from combat and take time to rest, take leave to visit family, attend more literacy and other education programs, and retrain for future operations should have a significant effect on decreasing attrition and improving retention.

Fifth, leader development is critical and is the number one priority for NTM-A. Poor leadership has been a prime factor in casualties, attrition rates, and endemic corruption within the ANP. To combat this, MoI and NTM-A have created programs to develop service-oriented, competent, and honorable leaders. These include inculcating an ethic of career-long education and development in current and future leaders; placing emphasis on appropriate manning and leadership for all schools and courses to provide oversight and leaders for trainees to emulate; and providing strategic leader development through advising and professional development courses. Key steps by MoI to implement these include the creation of a career development plan for patrolmen, noncommissioned officers, and officers consisting of training, education, and experience. To further training and education, enduring institutions are being created, including a 6-month officer candidate school, a 4-month noncommissioned officer course to complement the National Police Academy run by the Germans, and plans to create a command and staff college and company commanders' course to develop midgrade leaders. To ensure these projects are successful and enduring, the collaboration and cooperation of bilateral agreements, EUPOL, and NTM-A with the MoI will be critical.

Conclusion

Instituting a Recruit-Train-Assign model, pay incentives, partnering, predictability, and

leadership development measures together make up the new approach to developing the ANP. However, even with these initiatives, many significant challenges lie ahead. Shortages of coalition trainers threaten the long-term viability of leadership development programs. A lack of robust Afghan training personnel, and those capable of being trained to be instructors, hinders the enduring nature of coalition-built training institutions. High demands for operational requirements throughout the country employ police forces faster than they can be developed. Each of these challenges can be overcome through a unity of effort based on the cooperation, collaboration, and coordination of the various actors developing the ANP.

Successful counterinsurgency operations and the transition of security responsibility to the Afghan National Security Force depend on the creation of a well-structured, highly trained, and professional police force. To provide security and control, a professional policing function is necessary at all levels, from patrolling cities and villages to monitoring border posts. Unfortunately, this has been absent throughout most of Afghanistan. One reason for this is the convoluted authority and responsibility mechanisms in place among the various organizations and nations developing the ANP. By creating better systems to cooperate, collaborate, and coordinate among the various entities supporting the ANP, a more resilient police force can be built with sustainable systems and the right type of organization to fight the insurgency. More importantly, it will help the GIRoA convince the people that their government has gained sufficient momentum to garner their support—which is critical to the peace and stability of Afghanistan. [PRISM](#)

Notes

¹ Dylan Hendrickson and Andrzej Karkoszka, “The Challenges of Security Sector Reform,” SIPRI Yearbook 2002: *Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2002), 180–181.

² Tonita Murray, “Police-Building in Afghanistan: A Case Study of Civil Security Reform,” *International Peacekeeping* 14, no. 1 (February 2007), 108–126.

³ Angelo Rasanayagam, *Afghanistan: A Modern History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003), 96–97.

⁴ Jason C. Howk, *A Case Study in Security Sector Reform: Learning from Security Sector Reform/Building in Afghanistan (October 2002–September 2003)* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, November 2009), 33–34.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Central Asia, Bobby Wilkes, Testimony to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Subcommittee of National Security and Foreign Affairs, “Oversight of U.S. Efforts to Train and Equip Police and Enhance the Justice System in Afghanistan,” June 18, 2008, 7–8.

⁷ Howk, 10.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁹ Murray, 108–126.

¹⁰ The Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI), *Security Sector Reform Monitor No. 1, Afghanistan* (Waterloo, ON: CIGI, July 2009), 8.

¹¹ NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan (NTM–A)/Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan (CSTC–A) brief by Deputy Commanding General for Programs, “Program Team Deep Dive,” February 19, 2010, slide 27.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ See <www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_52802.htm> for more information.

¹⁴ NATO Headquarters Brussels, Public Diplomacy Division, “Backgrounder on the NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan,” October 2009.

¹⁵ NTM–A/CSTC–A brief.